

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reexamination of the captioned application is respectfully requested.

A. SUMMARY OF THIS AMENDMENT

By the current amendment, Applicants basically:

1. Thank the Examiner for allowance of claims 9, 12, 14, 15, 21, 25 and 27-34.
2. Thank the Examiner the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 5-7, 18-20 and 26.
3. Amend the dependency of claim 26.
4. Respectfully traverse all prior art rejections.

B. PATENTABILITY OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-4, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,686,075 to Gieshoff et al. All prior art rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

The sole applied reference, US Patent 6,686,075 to Gieshoff et al, has an effective US filing date of May 18, 2001. On the other hand, Applicants' foreign priority filing date is March 6, 2001. Applicants now prove a date earlier than Gieshoff by providing a certified translation of their Japanese priority document. *See, e.g., Manual Of Patent Examining Procedure (MPEP) §201.15*

Applicants submit that the filing of the certified English language translation of their Japanese priority document removes Gieshoff as reference, thereby rendering all claims allowable.

C. MISCELLANEOUS

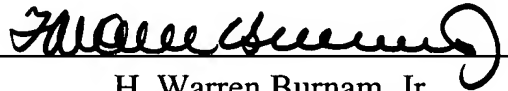
In view of the foregoing and other considerations, all claims are deemed in condition for allowance. A formal indication of allowability is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge the undersigned's deposit account #14-1140 in whatever amount is necessary for entry of these papers and the continued pendency of the captioned application.

Should the Examiner feel that an interview with the undersigned would facilitate allowance of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment:
certified English language translation of
Japanese priority document